

Syracuse University

SURFACE

Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects

Spring 5-1-2014

Books and Bruschetta: An Investigation of the College Students' Diet

Corie Lee Adamucci

Follow this and additional works at: https://surface.syr.edu/honors_capstone



Part of the [Comparative Nutrition Commons](#), [Human and Clinical Nutrition Commons](#), and the [Other Nutrition Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Adamucci, Corie Lee, "Books and Bruschetta: An Investigation of the College Students' Diet" (2014).
Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects. 784.
https://surface.syr.edu/honors_capstone/784

This Honors Capstone Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects at SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.

Books and Bruschetta: An Investigation of the College Students' Diet

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at
Syracuse University

Corie Lee Adamucci
Candidate for B.S. Degree
and Renée Crown University Honors
May 2014

Honors Capstone Project in Nutrition Dietetics

Capstone Project Advisor: _____
Kay S. Bruening, Dept. Chair
Associate Professor

Capstone Project Reader: _____
Jane Uzcategui, Instructor

Honors Director: _____
Stephen Kuusisto, Director

Date: April 22, 2014

© Corie Adamucci 2014

Abstract

This project identifies the main issues seen in the dietary habits of college-aged young adults through a comprehensive literature review of studies on the topic. Roughly half of the research articles were obtained through Dr. Tanya Horacek, an associate professor in SU's Department of Public Health, Food Studies, and Nutrition, who has done research on the college diet and factors that affect the college diet. Other studies were obtained via scholarly journals including, but not limited to the *Journal of American College Health*, the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, and the *Journal of Exercise Physiology*. Major problems in college aged students' dietary habits included failing to meet nutritional recommendations for healthy adults, heavy alcohol consumption, and skewed nutritional beliefs. The collective methods and limitations of these studies are addressed.

As a creative component, the blog *Books and Bruschetta: Cooking my way through college* was created using wordpress.com as a formatting template in the fall of 2012. Recipes were researched for health, cost, and feasibility before 2-4 were chosen each week to be made and posted to the blog. Blogs included a short story or anecdote, a recipe (including a list of ingredients and detailed directions), a nutrient analysis for a serving of the dish, and pictures. During the spring of 2013, while abroad in Florence, Italy, posts included a story, a description of the food eaten in a day or on a trip, a nutrient analysis of the dish if possible, and pictures.

Books and Bruschetta is currently composed of one hundred fourteen posts and still growing. The blog has the potential to fill certain gaps found in the literature on the dietary habits of college-aged students. These include increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, as well as increasing dietary variety with over seventy blog posts containing recipes and motivation for incorporating different fruits and vegetables into the diet. *Books and Bruschetta: Cooking my way through college* has the potential to be a critical tool in lowering the perceived barriers to healthy eating for college-aged students and changing the way they think about nutrition for the better.

Executive Summary

Books & Bruschetta is the comprehensive identification of nutrition related problems most prevalent among college aged students coupled with a possible solution in an easy to maneuver, healthy food blog. There is a breadth of research on the eating habits of adults, but not as much on the specific habits of college-aged students despite important findings that college-aged students are not following dietary guidelines for Americans. My capstone project takes some of the major works on the subject of college-age dietary habits and comprehensively reviews this research. It outlines the major findings and nutrition problems most often cited among students roughly ages 18-22. These include subjects most often failing to consume the minimum servings for breads and grains, fruits and vegetables, and dairy, while consuming more than recommended amounts of saturated fat, cholesterol, and sugar. Other commonly cited problems included heavy alcohol consumption and disadvantageous dieting behaviors. Major limitations to the studies were small sample sizes and self-reported data, which could imply the potential for bias, however many studies still came to similar conclusions.

I then take a look at my own dietary habits through an analysis of my food blog titled *Books & Bruschetta: Cooking My Way Through College*. I compiled the healthy food blog over the course of the 2013-2014 school year. During the first half of the year I researched and cooked Italian inspired dishes in my off-campus apartment, while studying at Syracuse University. The second half of the year details my eating habits while studying abroad in Florence, Italy. This

included what I chose to eat during my travels as well as the meals my Italian host mom cooked for me. The analysis aims to take a critical look at my diet in regards to the nutrition problems found among young adults my age. It identifies what number of blog posts contain adequate servings of fruits and/or vegetables, the variety of fruits and vegetables included and a more specific look at some of the recipes containing these often forgotten food groups. Fruits and vegetables can often times scare people, but giving detailed recipes to make these food groups a little more appealing is what the blog really aims to do. Sometimes, all it takes is a spark.

My research identified a pressing need for future investigation into the dietary habits of young adults. According to a 2005 study, the greatest increases in overweight and obesity occur in persons between the ages of 18 and 29, which encompasses the age of the college student. There are also future directions for my blog. Technology is an increasingly important facet in the lives of college students and may be a solution of consideration in improving the diets of young adults. Blogs are not at all difficult to access and are easy to maneuver for college-aged students. The possibility for success deserves further contemplation.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my family. Without you all and the atmosphere you created for me, my interests would not have been able to blossom into the passions they are today. Thank you for supporting me throughout this process.

I would like to thank Dr. Kay Stearns Bruening for all her guidance over the past four years and her help in developing my project. Dr. Bruening, when I wanted to give up on *Books and Bruschetta* you helped me to find a direction and a purpose for it. I am immensely grateful for all you've done.

In addition, I would like to thank my honors reader Professor Jane Uzcategui for supporting me throughout my undergraduate career and being a huge influence on *Books & Bruschetta: Cooking my way through college*.

Advice to Future Honors Students

Do not give up. Your work is important and you deserve to be heard.

Introduction

As a senior college student I have seen my fair share of weight fluctuations. I have witnessed the late night junk food binge and the progressive aversion to dining hall options. I am veteran of the war on ramen noodles for dinner and a survivor of the “freshman fifteen.” Over my four years of undergraduate study I could not help, but gain a curiosity into the eating habits of all college-aged students. From what I had heard in class and in the media, as well as what I could see for myself, there was a major gap in the dietary habits of college-aged students that needed to be filled. Who better to develop an idea to fill that gap than a college nutrition student who knows how to eat right and how hard it can be in a college setting? Before I could even begin to figure out how I could help, I needed some insight into my own eating habits, as well as the major nutritional problems found amongst college students across the country. This paper will explore the major research on the subject of college students’ dietary habits, identifying the major nutrition problems facing this population; analyze a first hand account of my own adventures in nutrition and cooking via *Books and Bruschetta: Cooking My Way Through College*; and connect the two with an analysis of how well the food and recipe content of *Books and Bruschetta* fills the gaps usually found in college diets.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

Findings suggest that American adults, especially young adults of college age, are not following nutritional guidelines such as those in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.¹ This is of concern because these young adults are at a critical stage of their lives, developing opinions and behaviors without the same influence from their parents and/or guardians as they were previously. University students are experiencing life on their own. They are making independent decisions and encountering facilitators of and barriers to their dietary habits. Environment, nutrition knowledge, convenience foods, time, media influence, and food cost, with environment being cited most frequently, are some of the known barriers to and facilitators of healthy dietary habits that studies have uncovered,² and are huge factors when considering why a significant proportion of college aged students are having this problem with nutrition and what can be done to improve upon it. The studies reviewed pointed to a few common themes including college-aged students failing to meet nutritional recommendations for healthy adults, heavy alcohol consumption, and skewed nutritional beliefs.

Not Meeting Nutritional Recommendations

College aged students reportedly are not meeting the standards set for healthy people, including failing to consume the minimum servings for breads and grains, fruits and vegetables, and dairy as well as exceeding the recommended levels of saturated fat, cholesterol, and sugar.^{1,3} A study of women attending a university in Houston, Texas found that only 15% of participants consumed the recommended 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day.¹ Another large

study of college students found that over 69% of college-aged participants reported that they get less than 5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily.³ Of the seventeen studies analyzed in this review, six uncovered that students were almost never meeting the recommendations for grain, fruit, and vegetable consumption.^{1,3,4,5,6} Because there is a high percentage of weight gain being seen amongst college students, especially in their first year of college,^{3,4,6} I chose to focus on more nutrient dense fruits and vegetables as areas for improvement.

Heavy Alcohol Consumption

Another finding of interest was that heavy alcohol consumption among college students affects their nutrition status. Alcohol is a calorie dense beverage, providing seven kcals per gram, and little to no nutritional value. Excessive alcohol, coupled with other risky behaviors such as tobacco use and sedentary behavior, are major contributors to chronic diseases including coronary heart disease, cancers, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.⁷ The data from a 2002 study of Wisconsin eighteen and nineteen year old college students suggests that men are drinking more alcohol than women and report that most of the time they are drinking to get drunk. Asking underage persons about their drinking habits could result in potentially inflated or deflated numbers. It is difficult to assess such surveys because men could be inflating their numbers to seem “macho,” while women may feel as though drinking to get drunk is embarrassing and thus neglect to report it, whether or not it was actually the case. Healthy People 2000’s objective 4.67 was to have not more than 32% of college students

drinking heavily, but findings suggest that underclass students alone are far exceeding this.⁷ A 2004 study of changes in female nutrient intakes at the beginning and end of their freshman years found a significant increase in the percentage of alcohol consumed and the number of alcoholic beverages consumed per day.⁴ College students identified alcohol as a barrier to healthy eating, along with inconvenience, cost, lack of time due to college life, and a lack of healthy options on campus in a focus group study at a large midwestern university.⁸ Five of the seventeen total studies found evidence supporting that heavy alcohol consumption is a barrier for healthy eating habits among all college students.^{4 7 8 9}

¹⁰ Butler et al. found significant decreases in total caloric intake, vegetables, bread/pasta, milk, and meat as well as significant decreases in grams of carbohydrate and protein in female college freshman over the course of their first 5 months. Inversely they found significant increases in the percentage of calories from alcohol consumed and number of alcoholic beverages consumed per day, suggesting that alcohol is displacing these nutrient dense foods.⁴ College women, in focus groups, attributed weight gain over their college careers to alcohol consumption, describing a pattern of “drink more, eat less”, again suggesting a displacement of nutrient-dense foods with calorie dense alcohol.⁸ Both men and women identified alcohol as a contributor to unhealthy eating habits as a concurrent behavior in that heavy alcohol consumption promoted consumption of unhealthy snacks and meals.⁸

Skewed Nutritional Beliefs

Ideally, increased nutrition knowledge would allow young adults to make smart and informed decisions to maximize their health. Findings suggest that college-aged students, especially young adult women, are not getting evidence-based nutrition health information from reliable sources to make those smart decisions.¹¹ Females were found to rely heavily on dietary fat avoidance to reduce caloric intake compared to men, which could be a serious problem. A study of college students in 2000 suggested that dietary fat avoidance could be a predictor of eating pathology and/or psychosocial problems in college-aged women.¹² College-aged females have reported unsafe weight loss techniques. A 2006 study compared the dieting practices among normal, overweight, and obese college females and discovered that a much greater percentage of obese females consciously made the effort to eat less than they wanted to, a form of self-deprivation as a dieting practice, even while taking an introductory nutrition course.¹³ Another finding was that only about half of participants with BMIs indicating overweight actually report themselves as overweight, suggesting that many overweight young adults do not even recognize a need to improve their health.¹⁴

Mitchell investigated changes in students' knowledge and/or behavior, after taking a basic college nutrition course. Of the reviewed articles it was the only one to utilize a control group. The researchers collected data on the knowledge and behavior of students who had taken a basic nutrition course and compared them with students who had not, before and after completing the course. Students who had taken the course were significantly more concerned

with weight control, fat and cholesterol reduction, and sodium control in the post-semester test than control students. Concern for sodium content of diet was minimal, while concern about calories was high. College women in the study used self-prescribed diets and had a low understanding of the role, importance, and make-up of carbohydrates. Students also were misinformed about the composition of common foods.¹¹ It appears college-aged students may continue to have skewed beliefs even after participating in formal nutrition education. Popular media and the ever-expanding information available on the Internet could be a potential source of nutrition misinformation for young adults.

Methods

A majority of the studies summarized above utilized a cross-sectional methodology^{1,3,7,12} in which the researcher examines one point in time, providing a snap shot of the habits, behaviors, beliefs, and/or disease states of a study population in a moment. Cross-sectional studies have the potential for bias since results could be specific to that particular population. Cross-sectional studies cannot examine the long-term effects of behaviors, which could provide useful insights about nutrition behaviors of young adults. Other studies were short prospective studies^{4,15} analyzing the population at two different points in time and comparing the two to determine any changes. These studies were usually 5 or 10-month study periods.

Ten of the seventeen studies reviewed utilized validated and reliable questionnaires and/or survey instruments for data collection. Often times, data

included self-reported anthropometric measures.^{3, 4, 5, 9, 12, 14, 15,} Only two of the studies^{7, 16} used questionnaires that were not identified as previously validated, but those studies' results were consistent with similar results from studies that did use validated methods. Other methods included photovoice,² 3-day food records,^{1,10} focus groups⁸, and a pretest/posttest survey.¹¹

Limitations

The most noted limitations found in the reviewed studies were small sample sizes, potentially biased recruitment methods, and self-reported data. It is both costly and time consuming for researchers to take participants' anthropometric measurements themselves, especially if the sample population is of a large size, which is needed to demonstrate statistically significant differences. Studies where researchers collect anthropometric measures are often conducted with much smaller samples of subjects. Small sample size can limit the generalizability of a study, especially if only conducted with students from one university. Many studies on the dietary habits of college-aged students are conducted on a convenience sample of participants from general health or nutrition courses, which suggests additional potential bias, as these students are likely to have an increased interest in health and nutrition. These studies may underestimate the number or magnitude of dietary problems among the college-aged population.

Use of BMI in assessing the health of college-aged students has been criticized because of the age range of this population.^{3,6} According to the CDC,

BMI for adults ages 20 and over is interpreted using standard weight status categories that are the same for all ages and for both men and women. BMI for children and teens below the age of 20 is both age and sex specific and reported as a percentile.¹⁷ The college-aged population usually encompasses a range of eighteen to twenty-two years of age meaning different BMI assessment criteria could be used in different studies of the same demographic group. Huang et al. defined overweight and obesity for participants, ages 19 and younger, using two different methods. The first defined overweight as greater than or equal to 85th BMI percentile and obesity as greater than or equal to 95th BMI percentile. The second defined overweight as BMI greater than or equal to 25 kg/m² and obesity as a BMI greater than or equal to 30 kg/m², which is usually the standard used for adults. When using BMI percentile cutoffs for participants 19 years and younger, they found a lower overall prevalence of overweight and obesity (16.2% overweight, 4.2% obese) than when using the adult criteria for BMI (21.6% overweight, 4.9% obese).³ Another of the studies on college freshmen used both CDC BMI-for-age growth curves for males and females as well as the adult BMI criteria to distinguish between underweight, normal weight, and overweight students. The study recognized that adult BMI criteria generally are used for college students, but the two produce slightly different classifications and results. When using the BMI-for-age criteria 4% of the students were classified as overweight, but the adult BMI criteria would classify 18% as overweight.⁶ Inconsistencies among BMI measuring methods could explain inconsistencies between study results. BMI should be interpreted using NIH adult criteria for

overweight and obesity. Both studies observed in this review underestimated the percentage of participants that were overweight and obese when using CDC age percentiles to interpret BMI.

According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Evidence Analysis Library, eating fruits and vegetables is an evidence-based approach to weight management. There is strong evidence that a reduced calorie diet should be the basis of a comprehensive weight management program.¹⁸ The nutrient-dense, low calorie composition of fruits and vegetables make them an ideal option for calorie reduction and subsequently weight reduction and management.

Chapter 2

Books & Bruschetta: The Blog

Introduction

Books & Bruschetta: Cooking My Way Through College is my healthy Italian-inspired food blog outlining my adventures in cooking, traveling, and eating. The project was a way in which I could channel my passions for food, cooking, and nutrition education. At its creation, *Books and Bruschetta* was a way to record and get a better understanding of my own dietary habits, but over the past two years has turned into something much greater. It became a creative outlet that has grown into a new passion. The blog began in the fall of 2013 in my small off campus apartment's kitchen, detailing the trials and tribulations of a college girl trying to cook for herself. I had a habit of spreading all my books, notebooks, and homemade snacks out on my table when I was studying. The table was

littered with appetizers, both edible and intellectual hors d'oeuvres. That is when the name *Books and Bruschetta* came to me and thus a blog was born. In the spring semester of 2014 I took *Books and Bruschetta* with me to Florence, Italy as I studied abroad and became acquainted with new eating habits and cooking styles. Upon my return to Syracuse University, the blog became a fusion of old and new, taking what I had learned over the year, melding styles and tastes. Most of the blog posts are structured in the same format. They begin with a short anecdote or story. These were more prevalent while I was abroad, exploring brand new places and foods. The blog post then moves into a recipe or description of what was eaten. The recipes included ingredient lists and detailed directions coupled with nutrition and cooking tips. Finally most posts are accompanied by the nutrition information for one serving of the dish or meal. All posts incorporate pictures of the foods and the more advanced cooking methods for visual clarity. Currently, *Books and Bruschetta* is composed of one hundred fourteen posts and still growing. Seventy-seven of the posts include detailed recipes and the other sixty-seven posts give insight into my habits while abroad and making informed decisions when eating out.

Books and Bruschetta & the Dietary Guidelines

As noted in the research above, Americans, especially those of college-age, are consuming lower than recommended amounts of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. This is of concern because these foods provide important nutrients including potassium, calcium, dietary fiber, and vitamin D. Dietary intakes of

these nutrients is actually low enough to be of public health concern for both children and adults.¹⁹ Fruits and vegetables in particular have become forgotten foods, especially on college campuses. The USDA recommends that adults should be consuming 2.5 cups of vegetables²⁰ and 2 cups of fruits²¹ per day. *Books and Bruschetta* currently contains a total of fifty blog posts with recipes containing vegetables. Of these fifty posts, twenty-four of them are purely vegetable dishes or side dishes and twenty-six of them are for recipes that incorporate some type of vegetable. Sixteen posts that do not include recipes give ideas for incorporating vegetables into a meal either at home or when eating out at a restaurant, and two of those posts give specific tips for restaurants in the Syracuse area. I noticed that while in America I consumed a higher number of vegetable heavy dishes. This included salads or meals composed of many vegetable sides. In Italy I found myself consuming more dishes that incorporated vegetables, but not usually as the bulk of the main dish. There were many pasta and risotto dishes that had a vegetable component. Both types of vegetable dishes are important if one wants to meet the recommended 2.5 cups of vegetables per day. Experiencing the different ways cultures treat vegetables has helped me to build a more diverse repertoire of recipes.

Eight posts featured on *Books and Bruschetta* contain fruit recipes. Three of the recipes are for healthy snacks or breakfast foods with fruits and three of the recipes are for fruit centered desserts. Two of the recipes work fruits into savory dishes. People often forget that sweet and savory flavors can work together and fruit can be a part of dinner, which is a great way to add more fruits if snacking

throughout the day is still not supplying the recommended 2 cups. Having only eight posts with recipes and ideas to incorporate more fruits into the diet, out of a total of one hundred fourteen total blog posts, identified a need for more posts dedicated to providing recipes and/or tips for increasing fruit consumption. Fruits are an important part of our diet, providing vitamins A and C as well as a variety of health promoting phytochemicals. These fruits can replace calorie dense snacks for a more nutrient-dense alternative.

Books and Bruschetta & Dietary Variety

Dietary variety is another nutritional concern for college-aged young adults. Foods contain different combinations of nutrients and healthful phytochemicals, meaning no single food can supply all the nutrients in the amounts needed for any one person.¹⁹ Instead, a variety of foods are needed to provide proper nutrition. In a college setting where convenience is valued, it is easy to fall into patterns of eating the same few things repeatedly, especially if eating from fast food or convenience food establishments on a regular basis. Anding found a 100% noncompliance to the dietary guideline for eating a variety of foods in her 2001 study on the compliance of college women to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. To assess variety of the participants' diets Anding compared their intakes with the suggestion to consume the suggested number of servings from 5 food groups on the USDA Food Guide Pyramid.¹ College students do not always have much experience in cooking and could easily be

turned away from trying new foods because of a lack of knowledge on how to cook them.

Books and Bruschetta provides recipes with a wide variety of different foods and cooking techniques. For vegetables, it has recipes for sweet potatoes, mushrooms, broccoli, tomatoes, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, squash, cucumber, peppers, zucchini, peas, eggplant, Swiss chard, kale, spinach, asparagus, snap peas, and Bok Choy. Fourteen posts include recipes for or ideas on adding sweet potatoes to the diet in ways ranging from simple roasted sweet potatoes to a creamy sweet potato sauce for pasta. These recipes are easy to follow. I am not a chef or an expert cook and even though I enjoy experimenting in the kitchen, I make sure that my directions are as simple and user friendly as possible. These recipes make vegetables more accessible to readers and allow them to see that cooking swiss chard doesn't have to be hard or intimidating. Instead it can be fun and yield surprisingly delicious results.

Books and Bruschetta: A Sample of Recipes Featuring Fruits & Vegetables

Sweet Potato Pancakes (makes about 12)

Posted: November 25th, 2013

Adapted from Healy Eats Real: <http://healyeatsreal.com/sweet-potato-pancakes/>

1 large sweet potato

1/2 a yellow onion

2 eggs

1/2 tbsp almond flour (or coconut flour)

1/2 tsp salt and pepper

2 tbsp coconut oil

Shred your sweet potato and onion. I used my mom's fancy food processor and the job was done in a snap! Put all your shreadings on a towel and squeeze out all the moisture. Set aside on the towel.



In a large bowl whisk together the eggs, flour, salt, and pepper. Try and squeeze any remaining moisture out of the sweet potato and onions then throw them into the bowl. Mix well.

Heat your coconut oil in a small/medium-sized skillet or pan. Add small handfuls

of the potato mix to the hot oil. Cook for a few minutes on each side until golden brown. Place on a paper towel after frying to soak up any extra oil. Be careful with them though! Mine were a tad fragile.



Nutty Eggplant Lasagna Rolls (Serves 4)

Posted: September 8th, 2012

Adapted from <http://veganyummyum.com/page/13/>

8 whole wheat lasagna noodles

1 eggplant

olive oil

salt and black pepper

2+ cups marinara sauce (I used one 32 oz can of chopped tomatoes with basil and garlic and 1 6oz can of tomato paste, but you can use your favorite marinara)

For walnut and pine nut spread

2/3 cup walnuts

1/2 cup pine nuts

1 tbsp water

1/2 tsp white wine vinegar

juice of 1/2 lemon

pinch of salt

handful of fresh basil

hearty pinch of dried italian herbs

Boil your noodles in salted water until al dente. Drain them and lay them out on a cookie sheet then spray with some oil to prevent them from sticking. Set this aside.

Stand up your eggplant and slice into long, thin vertical slices. Then slice each of these in half again vertically. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Brown the eggplant strips in olive oil in a large skillet. When tender and browned, set aside. In the same hot skillet toast the walnuts and pine nuts over medium low heat until golden brown.

Add the nuts to a food processor, or blender and grind. Add the rest of the spread ingredients and process until well combined. (you can add some olive oil if the spread is too thick or will not process well)

Preheat that oven to 400 degrees F because it's time to assemble. Spread the walnut and pine nut mixture onto each noodle.



Lay eggplant slices on top of that and then roll them up. Place them in a baking dish and scoop over a good amount of marinara to bake in.



Bake them for 20 minutes. Take them out when they are nice and hot. I topped mine with some mozzarella and basil (because I do love me some cheese), but you can keep these vegan and leave that off. The flavors are amazing and honestly don't need anything else. Grab a friend and chow down. You won't regret it and you'll never look at lasagna the same way again. (It's a good thing, trust me.)



Raw Asparagus and Red Onion Salad

Posted: August 22nd, 2012

Adapted from Anne Burrell's *Cook Like A Rockstar*



1 bundle asparagus, woody stems removed

1 small red onion, fine dice

3/4-cup parmigiano reggiano cheese

1/3 cup red wine vinegar

Extra Virgin Olive Oil

kosher salt

Cut the asparagus into very thin rounds and place in a bowl. Toss with the onion and cheese. Drizzle the asparagus with some extra virgin olive oil, and vinegar.

Toss it all together and season with salt. Now go get eating!

Rosemary Skirt Steak Over Balsamic Acorn Squash

Posted: September 13th, 2014

A Books and Bruschetta Original



Rosemary Skirt Steak:

1 skirt steak, sliced into 3 or 4 pieces

salt and pepper

olive oil

fresh rosemary

Heat a tablespoon or two over medium heat in your pan. Add roughly chopped rosemary sprigs and cook until fragrant. Add in skirt steak and cook until browned and beautiful.



Balsamic Acorn Squash

1/2 an acorn squash

olive oil

handful of raisins

handful of chopped pecans

splash balsamic vinegar

salt and pepper to taste

Scrape out the seeds, peel and dice your acorn squash half. Heat a splash of olive oil over medium heat and add in your acorn squash. Cook until tender and starting to brown. Add in raisins and pecans along with a splash of balsamic vinegar and cook for a few more minutes. Eat it all.

Overnight Oatmeal (serves 1)

Posted: August 23rd, 2012

Adapted from theyummylife.com



1 mason jar

1/4 cup old fashioned rolled oats

1/3-cup milk

¼ cup Greek yogurt

1-½ tsp. Chai seeds

1 Tbsp. natural peanut butter

1 tsp. honey

fruit (enough to fill the jar, I used strawberries and bananas in one jar and blueberries in another jar)

Put everything into the jar and mix it up. Cover with a lid or saran wrap and a rubber band. Refrigerate overnight and your oatmeal will be ready for you in the morning!

Chapter 3

Future Directions

The published literature illustrates a pressing need for further investigation into the dietary habits of young adults, as well as a need for interventions for the problems that have already been identified. Technology is an increasingly important facet in the lives of college students and may be a solution worth considering in improving the diets of young adults. Millennial students are on their computers daily, a habit that is ripe for capitalization. Blogs like *Books and Bruschetta: Cooking My Way Through College* could be an effective tool to

distribute helpful food and nutrition information to college students across the United States. Blogs are very easy to maneuver. *Books and Bruschetta* has an easy to read, scroll through format. On the left side of the blog there is a list of the five most recent posts. Beneath that there is a section titled “I’m Looking For,” where the reader can click on a tag word that is linked to all the posts related to it. For instance, there is a tag for all the soups on the blog, or the reader could click on the kale tag for all the recipes including kale. There are over seventy tags associated with posts on the blog and their recipes.

Not only are blogs easy to navigate, especially for this generation of technology-savvy young adults, but are also a more engaging tool. Readers are able to get a different view on a recipe. They get to read a funny anecdote or gain some insight into the makings of the dish. Blogs can also promote seasonal eating, by posting recipes for foods in that season, increasing dietary variety of intrepid students. A blogger has the power to provide essential information, coupled with ideas to put that information into action, all in one post. *Books and Bruschetta: Cooking My Way Through College* is just a start.

There are a number of food, nutrition, and cooking blogs on the Internet aimed at young adults, particularly those in college and on a budget. There are blogs to fill every want and need, ranging anywhere from simple and affordable recipes for the everyday student to vegetarian dorm room meals you can cook in a microwave. *Cooking in College* is an example of a blog similar to *Books and Bruschetta*. The blog is run by a couple of 2012 college graduates, but still posts healthy and inexpensive recipes. Similar to *Books and Bruschetta* there are

detailed ingredient lists and step-by-step directions along with beautiful pictures. Some of the *Cooking in College* recipes are more elaborate and time consuming than the posts on *Books and Bruschetta* and none include nutrition information for recipes. Like many of the other blogs on the Internet with topics in food, nutrition, and cooking aimed at college-aged students, the authors of *Cooking in College* are not actually still in college, nor do they have a background in nutrition.²² From what I have seen, the authors of this, and similar blogs, have more time to dedicate to blogging, resulting in more frequent posts and better marketing, including adds and a presence on multiple forms of social media. However, without a background in nutrition or Registered Dietician credentials readers are left guessing whether or not their information is reputable. The problem, thus, is not finding nutrition and cooking blogs, but instead finding the right ones. Once these blogs, full of helpful tips and simple recipes, are found, they can be utilized to their full potential as an intervention strategy in improving dietary habits.

Conclusion

Books and Bruschetta: Cooking my way through college has the potential to be a critical tool in contributing to the health and wellness of college-aged young adults. College students view healthy eating as a series of barriers they need to overcome.^{2,8} *Books and Bruschetta* simplifies those barriers making healthy eating a much more attainable feat through stories, reviews, attractive images, and detailed cooking instructions. More ideas and more recipes on the blog, mean more opportunities for readers to incorporate fruits and vegetables into

their day-to-day eating habits. Recipes such as my Nutty Eggplant Lasagna Rolls and Sweet Potato Meatloaf add eggplant, sweet potatoes, or other vegetables to otherwise vegetable-void dishes. Other recipes help blueberries find their way into savory plates and help roasted apples sound more appealing than another ice cream sundae. Not only that, but the *Books and Bruschetta* blog posts incorporate vital nutrition information from reputable resources including the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. As seen in the literature review, young adults are not meeting these guidelines and an increase in awareness or knowledge on them is necessary.^{1,6} *Books and Bruschetta* along with other blogs of the same nature could change the way college-aged students think about nutrition and healthy eating.

Works Cited

1. Anding JD, Suminski RR, Boss L. Dietary Intake, Body Mass Index, Exercise and Alcohol: Are College Women Following the Dietary Guidelines for Americans? *Journal of American College Health*. 2001;49: 167-171.
2. Garcia AC, Sykes L, Mathews J. Perceived Facilitators of and Barriers to Healthful Eating Among University Students. *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*. 2010;71: 28-33.
3. Huang TT, Harris KJ, Lee RE, Nazir N, Born W, Kaur H. Assessing Overweight, Obesity, Diet, and Physical Activity in College Students. *Journal of American College Health*. 2003: 52: 83-86
4. Butler SM, Black DR, Blue CL, Gretebeck RJ. Change in Diet, Physical Activity, and Body Weight in Female College Freshman. *American Journal of Health and Behavior*. 2004;28: 24-32.
5. Haberman S, Luffey D. Weighing in College Students' Diet and Exercise Behaviors. *Journal of American College Health*. 1998 : 46: 189
6. Racette SB, Deusinger SS, Struble MJ, Highstein GR, Deusinger RH. Weight Changes, Exercise, and Dietary Patterns During Freshman and Sophomore Years of College. *Journal of American College Health*. 2005: 53: 245-251
7. Simpson WF, Brehm HN, Rasmussen ML, Ramsay J, Probst JC. Health and Fitness Profiles of Collegiate Undergraduate Students. *Journal of Exercise Physiology Online*. 2002; 5: 14-27.
8. LaCaille LJ, Dauner KN, Krambeer RJ, Pedersen J. Psychosocial and Environmental Determinants of Eating Behaviors, Physical Activity, and Weight Change Among College Students: A Qualitative Analysis. *Journal of American College Health*. 2011: 59: 531-538
9. Cooley E, Toray T. Disordered Eating in College Freshman Women: A Prospective Study. *Journal of American College Health*. 2001: 49: 229-235
10. Fray R, Hertzler AA. Dietary Status and Eating Out Practices of College Students. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 1992: 92: 867
11. Mitchell SJ. Changes After Taking a College Basic Nutrition Course. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 1990: 90: 955-960

12. Liebman M, Cameron BA, Carson DK, Brown DM, Meyer SS. Dietary Fat Reduction Behaviors in College Students: Relationship to Dieting Status, Gender, and Key Psychosocial Variables. *Department of Family and Consumer Sciences*, University of Wyoming Academic Press. 2000: 51-56
13. Malinauskas BM, Radeke TD, Aeby VG, Smith JL, Dallas MB. Dieting Practices, Weight Perceptions, and Body Composition: A Comparison of Normal Weight, Overweight, and Obese College Females. *Nutrition Journal*. 2006: 5: 1-8
14. Boyle JR, LaRose NR. Personal Beliefs, the Environment, and College Students' Exercise and Eating Behaviors. *American Journal of Health Studies*. 2008: 23: 195-200
15. Kapinos KA, Yakusheva O, Eisenberg D. Obesogenic Environmental Influences on Young Adults: Evidence from College Dormitory Assignments. *Economics and Human Biology*. 2003: 433: 1-12
16. Courtenay WH, McCreary DR, Merighi JR. Gender and Ethnic Differences in Health Beliefs and Behaviors. *Journal of Health Psychology*. 2007:7:219
17. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *About BMI for Adults 2011*. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult_bmi/. Accessed April 15, 2014.
18. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Adult Weight Management Guideline. *Evidence Analysis Library*. Available at: http://andevidencelibrary.com/template.cfm?template=guide_summary&key=622 Accessed April 19, 2014.
19. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*. 7th Edition, Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2012.
20. United States Department of Agriculture. *Vegetables 2014*. Available at: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/vegetables-amount.html>. Accessed April 17, 2014.
21. United States Department of Agriculture. *Fruits 2014*. Available at: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/fruits.html>. Accessed April 17, 2014.
22. Declan and Erica. *Cooking in College*. Available at: <http://cooking-in-college.com>. Accessed April 22nd, 2014